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**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS****OFFICIAL**

1. (original) A method for multimedia communication, comprising the steps of:
  - communicatively interconnecting a plurality of multimedia terminals to a plurality of corresponding multipoint control units;
  - communicatively interconnecting the plurality of corresponding multipoint control units to a central controller;
  - identifying capability factors for each of the plurality of multimedia terminals and each of the plurality of corresponding multipoint control units;
  - responsive to a command to initiate a multimedia communication between at least two of the plurality of multimedia terminals, evaluating the capability factors for each of the at least two multimedia terminals;
  - comparing the capability factors for each of the at least two multimedia terminals to the capability factors of the multipoint control units communicatively interconnected to the central controller to determine a preferred interconnection between the at least two multimedia terminals; and
  - responsive to the comparing of capability factors, the central controller directing a communicative interconnection between the at least two multimedia terminals via at least one of the plurality of multipoint control units.
2. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the capability factors include identification factors, matching factors, and routing factors.
3. (original) The method of Claim 2, wherein the identification factors include information relating to the identity, needs, requirements, and participation authority of the plurality of multimedia terminals.
4. (original) The method of Claim 2, wherein the matching factors include information relating to the capacity and technological orientation of each of the plurality of corresponding multipoint control units.

5. (original) The method of Claim 2, wherein the routing factors include information relating to the most expeditious route for effecting the communicative interconnection between the at least two multimedia terminals and the corresponding multipoint control unit.
6. (original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:  
allocating conferences on multipoint control units such that the number of conferences that can be scheduled on a conference schedule is optimized.
7. (original) The method of Claim 6, wherein the conference schedule is optimized by combining conferences on a multipoint control unit so as to maximize the number of participants on the multipoint control unit.
8. (original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:  
controlling multipoint control unit participant slots with the virtual multipoint control unit.
9. (original) The method of Claim 8, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit controls the multipoint control unit participant slots as if it were an additional multipoint control unit.
10. (original) The method of Claim 8, wherein the multipoint control unit participant slots are participant slots remaining after the multipoint control unit is optimally scheduled.
11. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the command to initiate a multimedia communication is issued when the start time for a conference arrives.
12. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the command to initiate a multimedia communication is issued when a participant requests an impromptu multimedia communication.
13. (original) A system for multimedia communication, comprising:  
a plurality of multimedia terminals;

a plurality of multipoint control units in communication with the plurality of multimedia terminals; and  
a virtual multipoint control unit communicatively interconnected to the plurality of corresponding multipoint control units for controlling the plurality of multipoint control units from a single location.

14. (original) The system of Claim 13, wherein at least one of the multimedia terminals is an H.320 terminal.
15. (original) The system of Claim 13, wherein at least one of the multimedia terminals is an H.323 terminal.
16. (original) The system of Claim 13, wherein at least one of the multimedia terminals is an H.321 terminal.
17. (original) The system of Claim 13, wherein the multimedia terminals include a combination of H.320, H.321, and H.323 systems.
18. (original) The system of Claim 13, wherein the multimedia terminals can communicate over an ATM network.
19. (original) The system of Claim 13, wherein the multimedia terminals can communicate over a LAN/Internet network.
20. (original) The system of Claim 13, wherein the multimedia terminals can communicate over an ISDN network.
21. (original) The system of Claim 13, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit is capable of communicating with terminals of various standards.

22. (original) The system of Claim 21, wherein the terminals are compatible with the H.320, H.321, and H.323 standards.

23. (original) The system of Claim 13, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit in communication with the at least two multipoint control units is capable of scheduling and hosting a video conference including terminals connected to at least two of the at least two multipoint control units.

24. (original) The system of Claim 13, wherein the virtual multipoint control unit is one of the plurality of multipoint control units.

25-48. (canceled)